

Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., today congratulated our 43rd President, George W. Bush, on his ascendancy to the nation's highest office in the nation's 55th inauguration. However, Jackson also challenged the President to begin the spread of "freedom in all the world" by fighting for freedom and democracy at home - in the District of Columbia.

"Mr. Bush is only the 16th President to get a second term, so I commend President George W. Bush upon his entrance into a second term. I agree with the President when he says 'America has need of idealism and courage, because we have essential work at home - the unfinished work of American freedom.' Indeed, my mother and father taught me that freedom and democracy, like charity, begin at home.

"While President Bush looks beyond our borders to extend the great blessings of liberty and democracy, he might do well first to look within his own nation, indeed within his own house. The President is not living in freedom and democracy in the place where he lays his head most nights - the White House in Washington, DC.

"Unlike *all other* freedom-loving democratic nations, the U.S. is the *only capital* in the world that has no voting representation in its national legislative body - in our case, the Congress of the United States. Even though there are more American citizens living in Washington, DC, than in some states (and almost as many as several others), those Americans have only one non-voting Delegate in the U.S. House and no representation in the U.S. Senate. The basis of our nation's revolution was taxation without representation!

"So if 'the moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right' is really what the President believes, then he should begin by supporting voting rights in both the U.S. House and Senate - or statehood - for the disenfranchised citizens in our nation's capital. It's time to end the oppression in the District of Columbia, and it's time for colonialism to end at the heart of our democracy. It's a matter of *values* - American citizens in the District of Columbia value freedom and democracy, too!

"Finally, it will be interesting to see if any member of the press sees the irony, asks a question or makes a point of reference that the President is advocating for freedom and democracy 'in all the world' while not recognizing, supporting or fighting for it in his own backyard, literally where he lives," Jackson concluded.